

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2886
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, MNUC, TECH, IN, PK, FR, US
SUBJECT: THE STIRN VISIT ANDNUCLEAR ISSUES: INDIA AND PAKISTAN

REF: NEW DELHI 10839 (NOTAL)

1. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. SUMMARY - NUCLEAR SUBJECTS
HAVE DOMINATED PRESS COVERAGE SO FAR OF THE VISIT OF FRENCH
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OLIVIER STIRN. AT
A PRESS CONFERENCE JULY 18, STIRN REPORTEDLY SAID THAT INDO-
FRENCH NUCLEAR COOPERATION WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF
INDIA'S DECLARATION THAT IT WOULD USE NUCLEAR POWER ONLY
FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES. ANSWERING A QUESTION ABOUT THE
SUPPLY OF ENRICHED URANIUM TO INDIA, STIRN SAID THE QUESTION
DOES NOT ARISE SINCE THE INDIANS HAVE NOT MADE ANY RE-
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QUEST. ACCORDING TO ONE PRESS ACCOUNT, STIRN SAID THAT
FRENCH NUCLEAR POLICY TOWARDS INDIA AND PAKISTAN WAS THE
SAME AND THAT THE STATUS OF THE FRENCH-PAKISTANI AGREE-
MENT ON THE REPROCESSING PLANT WAS "THE SAME". HOWEVER,
IN THE JULY 20 "INDIAN EXPRESS", CORRESPONDENT SAEED
NAQVI WROTE THAT STIRN TOLD HIM THAT COLLABORATION WITH
THE PAKISTANIS ON THE REPROCESSING PLANT WAS AT A "STAND-

STILL." NAQVI INTERPRETED THIS TO MEAN THAT PAKISTANI CMLA GENERAL ZIA HAD OPTED FOR US MILITARY ASSISTANCE INSTEAD OF THE REPROCESSING PLANT. THE FRENCH HERE TELL US THAT THE NAQVI STORY IS NOT "ACCURATE". OTHER SUBJECTS COVERED IN STIRN'S PRESS CONFERENCE INCLUDED AFRICA, DETENTE IN EUROPE, THE INDIAN OCEAN, AND AIRCRAFT SALES. A SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED DURING THE VISIT. END SUMMARY AND LOU.

2. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED - AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE JULY19 FOLLOWING TALKS WITH PRIME MINISTER DESAI, FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE AND OTHER MINISTERS, OLIVIER STIRN REPORTEDLY SAID THAT FRANCE FAVORED COOPERATION WITH INDIA IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD, APPRECIATED INDIA'S COMMITMENT NOT TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR ARMS, AND WOULD FAVORABLY CONSIDER ANY PROPOSAL TO HELP INDIA DEVELOP IT'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOURCE OF ENERGY. THE DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR POWER, HE SAID, WAS IMPORTANT FOR BOTH INDIA AND FRANCE BECAUSE THEIR POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF OIL RESOURCES WAS LIMITED AND SUCH DEVELOPMENT GAVE A COUNTRY INDEPENDENCE IN A VITAL FIELD. ASKED IF FRANCE WOULD BE WILLING TO SUPPLY ENRICHED URANIUM TO INDIA, STIRN SAID THAT NO REQUEST WAS MADE. ACCORDING TO THE "TIMES OF INDIA" ACCOUNT, STIRN SAID THAT FRENCH NUCLEAR POLICY TOWARDS INDIA AND PAKISTAN WAS THE SAME. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE FRENCH-PAKISTANI DEAL FOR THE SUPPLY OF A NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANT ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHICH THE USA HAD RESERVATIONS, THE "TIMES" SAID STIRN RESPONDED "IT IS THE SAME." OTHER NEWSPAPERS DO NOT CARRY THIS EXCHANGE.

3. HOWEVER, ON JULY 20 THE INDIAN EXPRESS" RAN A FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE HEADLINED, "PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR COLLABORATION WITH FRANCE AT STANDSTILL". IN THE ARTICLE, "EXPRESS" DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT SAEED NAQVI WRITES THAT STIRN "TOLD ME" IN THE COURSE OF A CONVERSATION THAT FRANCO-PAKISTANI COLLABORATION ON THE REPROCESSING PLANT IS AT A STANDSTILL." NAQVI THEN SPECULATES THAT THIS "WOULD IMPLY" THAT GENERAL ZIA HAD OPTED FOR AMERICAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE INSTEAD OF THE REPROCESSING PLANT "IN CASE SUCH ASSISTANCE IS FORTHCOMING." HE WRITES THAT AFTER THE AFGHAN COUP, PAKISTAN HAS BEEN KNOCKING ON THE US DOOR FOR THE RELEASE OF A-7S DESPITE THE FACT THAT IN THE VIEW OF INDIA AND VARIOUS OTHER COUNTRIES, EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN DO NOT CONSTITUTE A THREAT TO PAKISTAN.

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IF THE RECENT TALKS BETWEEN UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM AND INDIAN LEADERS ARE "ANY GUIDE," NAQVI SAYS, THE US WOULD LIKE TO DO BUSINESS AS USUAL WITH AFGHANISTAN AND GENERALLY AGREES WITH THE INDIAN ASSESSMENT. NEVERTHELESS, HE WRITES, GENERAL ZIA PERHAPS WOULD STILL LIKE TO KEEP THE DOOR OPEN FOR US ASSISTANCE WHICH WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE IF PAKISTAN GOES FORWARD WITH THE REPROCESSING PLANT. NAQVI THEN REVIEWS THE POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE REPROCESSING ISSUE IN PAKISTAN, THE US HOLD-UP ON THE EXPORT OF A SMALL AMOUNT OF PLUTONIUM TO PAKISTAN, AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE GLENN AMENDMENT. HE CONCLUDES THAT "OBSERVERS FEEL" THAT ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY PAKISTAN REGIME TO DROP THE REPROCESSING PROJECT PUBLICLY, "IT APPEARS THAT GENERAL ZIA HAS DECIDED TO SOFT-PEDAL THE REPROCESSING PLANT MAY EVEN ALLOW IT TO FADE OUT

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QUIETLY IF THE RETURNS WERE ASSURED."

4. IN ADDITION TO THE NUCLEAR ISSUE, STIRN WAS QUESTIONED

BY THE PRESS ON A NUMBER OF OTHER SUBJECTS DISCUSSED DURING HIS TALKS WITH INDIAN LEADERS. STIRN REPORTEDLY SAID THAT EAST-WEST RELATIONS HAD RUN INTO SOME PROBLEMS BUT FRANCE WAS DETERMINED TO PRESERVE DETENTE. ON AFRICA, HE SAID FRANCE FAVORED A POLICY OF AFRICA FOR THE AFRICANS AND VIEWED FOREIGN MILITARY PRESENCE THERE AS DESTABILIZING, BUT HE "JUSTIFIED" FRANCE'S ROLE IN ZAIRE BECAUSE IT WAS A LIMITED OPERATION UNDERTAKEN TO RESCUE EUROPEANS. ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT, HE "ADMITTED" THE PRESENCE IN AFRICA OF FRENCH MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO WERE HELPING TO TRAIN LOCAL ARMIES. ON THE INDIAN OCEAN, STIRN REPORTEDLY SAID THAT HE WELCOMED THE US-SOVIET EFFORTS TO FREEZE OR REDUCE THEIR PRESENCE BUT ADDED THAT FRANCE HAD TO MAKE ITS PRESENCE FELT BECAUSE OF ITS HISTORICAL CONNECTION WITH ONE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS. THE FRENCH PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WAS NOT SIGNIFICANT IN SIZE NOR THERE FOR AGGRESSIVE PURPOSES, HE SAID. REGARDING INDIAN CONSIDERATION OF THE PURCHASES OF MIRAGES, STIRN SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD TOLD HIM THAT A CHOICE HAD NOT BEEN MADE AND THE CABINET WOULD MAKE A DECISION AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME.

5. STIRN REPORTEDLY SAW GREAT SCOPE FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND SAID THAT A HIGH-LEVEL

DELEGATION OF FRENCH INDUSTRIALISTS AND FINANCIERS WOULD VISIT INDIA TOWARDS THE END OF THE YEAR TO DISCUSS PROSPECTS IN SPECIFIC AREAS. UNDER THE AGREEMENT FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION SIGNED BY STIRN AND THE INDIAN MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A JOINT INDO-FRENCH COMMITTEE WILL BE ESTABLISHED.

6. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE - COMMENT: THE FRENCH EMBASSY IS STILL BUSY WITH THE DELHI PORTION OF STIRN'S VISIT TO INDIA SO WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO CHECK OUT THE PRESS REPORTS AS YET. HOWEVER, IN A BRIEF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION SETTING UP A LATER APPOINTMENT, A FRENCH COLLEAGUE MADE A POINT OF TELLING EMBOFF THAT THE "INDIAN EXPRESS" STORY AS NOT ACCURATE. GOHEEN

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